

January 8, 2010



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Dear Friend,

We experienced a Christmas miracle a few weeks ago: despite the failure to identify Umar Farouk Abdulmutallab as a terrorist threat and prevent him from boarding Northwest Flight 253 with a bomb sewn into his underwear, the attack failed and we suffered no further civilian casualties on U.S. soil in the ongoing war on jihadism. While that is the good news, the bad news is that the system we have in place, which has been developed over the more than eight years after 9/11, completely failed to protect us against this attack. Sheer dumb luck should not be what stands between our safety and the next terrorist attack.

***Please scroll down to the end of this e-mail to answer a short survey regarding airport and homeland security.***

The system failed even though there was evidence that in my mind should have prevented the attack from progressing as far as it did. If telephone intercepts from al Qaeda indicating plans to use a Nigerian in a bombing, reports by Abdulmutallab's father to a U.S. embassy that his son was being radicalized and had disappeared in Yemen, the placement of Abdulmutallab on a terror-watch list, and a plane ticket bought with cash and no luggage do not constitute sufficient evidence to put counterterrorism efforts into motion, then I don't know what would. Good intelligence shouldn't require looking for a "smoking gun;" our intelligence and counterterrorism measures should ~~prevent~~ a smoking gun (and smoking pants).

One of the things that has become clear in the days after the Christmas Day attack is that somehow we failed to connect the dots. This was also a failure which led up to the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks, and the reason that one of the major recommendations of the 9/11 Commission was to create an agency to consolidate all intelligence and foster information-sharing. From this, we now have the National Counterterrorism Center (NCTC), and yet we still have systemic failure to share information that leads to actionable intelligence. The NCTC, as well as other agencies and departments, will face investigations and

#### Upcoming Town Hall

**January 14, 2010  
7:00 pm - 8:30 pm**  
Rio Vista High School  
Gymnasium  
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Rio Vista, CA 94571

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reviews in light of the most recent terror attempt.

As a Member of Congress and a member of the Homeland Security Committee, I believe that Congress should not escape scrutiny over this matter. Another of the recommendations of the 9/11 Commission was that Congress consolidate oversight over the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) so as to maximize the effectiveness of our resources in counterterrorism efforts instead of dedicating them to answering to multiple congressional committees. This is one recommendation from the 9/11 Commission – that Congress reform itself – that Congress has chosen to ignore. (Read a *New York Times* [editorial](#) on the "hydra-headed system of oversight" which has grown from 86 committees since publication of the editorial to 108 as of August 2008. To see a list of the 108 congressional committees DHS reports to, click [here](#). To see a chart of these committees, click [here](#). To see the number of briefings, meetings, and hearings DHS provided for each of the 108 committees, click [here](#).) Last year, six of my colleagues on the Homeland Security Committee and I signed a letter to Speaker Nancy Pelosi requesting that Congress finally enact the 9/11 Commission's recommendation, identified to be "among the most difficult and important," to consolidate jurisdiction over DHS in "a single, principal point of oversight." You can read that letter [here](#).

Another aspect of homeland security that must come under review is that while the inconvenience of flying has increased, our security is still very much at risk. Why should Americans be content to be subjected to ever-growing security demands and wait times without the assurance of greater safety? This is one of the reasons why I support the use of full-body scans in airports. Not only would this provide a valuable resource for security agents trying to identify threats, but it would also be more expedient and less intrusive and time-consuming than other possible screening alternatives. This technology would both increase our security officials' ability to safeguard us from people like Abdulmutallab and provide us with a more streamlined security process.

Although there are understandable privacy concerns, certain protections could be implemented: the agent viewing the body scan would be in a separate room and would not see the individuals being scanned in person; images could be deleted once the scan is complete; individuals could opt to be patted down rather than scanned; and finally, any inappropriate use of images would be subject to criminal prosecution.

More than eight years after 9/11, the conversation about homeland security is still underway. We must not be lulled into complacency that we are safe. The Christmas Day attack serves as an unfortunate but important reminder that we must never rest or grow lax in our vigilance against terrorism and that we need to continue to improve our system for both effectiveness and efficiency.

Sincerely,

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Daniel E. Lungren  
Member of Congress

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**Do you support the use of full-body scans in airports?**

- ☐ Yes  
☐ No  
☐ Unsure

**How would you rate the government's job of protecting the homeland from terrorist attacks since September 11, 2001?**

- ☐ Excellent  
☐ Good  
☐ Fair  
☐ Poor  
☐ Terrible  
☐ Unsure

**Any other comments?**

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